

>> A Study Guide on the Life of Nehemiah

# Nehemiah the Church Builder

## Student's Handbook

Version: 1.0 – 2006-12-30

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>DISCOVERY PROCEEDINGS (1.1-4)</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>DELIVERANCE’S PRAYER (1.5-11)</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Praise—Names and Attributes of God (5) .....	8
Petitions—Hear My Cry and Prayer! (6a, 11a).....	8
Penitence—Confession of Sin (6b, 7) .....	9
Promises—Appealing to the Promises of God (8, 9).....	10
Purpose—Giving God a Reason for the Appeal (10).....	10
Providence—Personal Appeal for Help (11b) .....	10
Summary of Nehemiah’s Prayer.....	11
<b>DIVINE PROVIDENCE (2.1-9)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>DETAILED PREPARATION (2.11-16)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>DETERMINED PEOPLE I (2.17-18)</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>DEVIL’S PROMOTERS I (2.10, 19, 20)</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>DILIGENT PARTIES (3.1-32)</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>DEVIL’S PROMOTERS II (4.1-23)</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Petty Troublemakers (1) .....	14
Psychological Threats (2-3, 10-12).....	14
Prayer Time (4-5).....	15
Physical Threats (6-8).....	16
Prepared Teamwork (9, 13-14, 20, 16-23).....	17
Perseverance Triumphs (15, 21-23).....	17
<b>DESTITUTE’S PROTECTOR (5.1-19)</b> .....	<b>18</b>
The Complaint (1-5).....	18

The Charge (6-7).....	19
The Confrontation (7-11) .....	19
The Cure (11) .....	20
The Consequences (8c, 12-13) .....	20
The Challenge (14-19).....	21
<b>DEVIL’S PROMOTERS III (6.1-14; 17-19).....</b>	<b>21</b>
Introduction .....	21
Intrigue (1-4) .....	22
Innuendo (5-9) .....	23
Intimidation (10-14) .....	24
Insinuation (17-19) .....	25
<b>DISPATCHED PROJECT (6.15, 16).....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>DELEGATED PROGRAM (7.1-3) .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Introduction .....	26
Present Priority (1-3).....	26
Public Piety (1) .....	26
Public Polity (2) .....	27
Police Protection (2) .....	28
Prescribed Program (2-3) .....	28
Summary .....	28
<b>DELIVERED PEOPLE (7.4-73A) .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Spacious City (7.4).....	28
Systematic Census (7.5).....	29
Scribed Catalogue (7.5-62).....	29
Separated Community (7.61-65) .....	30
Summary Count (7.66-69).....	31
Special Contribution (7.70-72) .....	31

<b>Settled Country (73a)</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>DECLARED PRECEPTS (7.73B-8.18)</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Reading (7.73b-8.8) – Intellectual Response to the Word</b> .....	<b>31</b>
Place (7.73b-8.1) .....	31
Pentateuch (8.1-6).....	32
Proclamation (8.7, 8).....	32
<b>Rejoicing (8.9-12) – Emotional Response to the Word</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Fellowship Feast (8.10-12).....	33
<b>Responding (8.13-18) – Volitional Response to the Word</b> .....	<b>34</b>
Elders’ Discovery (Nehemiah 8.13-15).....	34
Energetic Dispersion (Nehemiah 8.15-17a) .....	34
Earnest Devotion (Nehemiah 8.17b, 18).....	35
<b>DEBASED PENITENTS (9.1-37)</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Repentance (9.1-5a)</b> .....	<b>35</b>
Place (9.1) .....	35
Penitence (1-3) .....	36
Partition (9.2).....	36
Proclamation and Praise (3-5a).....	36
<b>Reflection (9.5b-37)</b> .....	<b>37</b>
Structure .....	37
Similarities .....	37
Sections.....	37
Consecration (9.5b).....	37
Creation (9.6) .....	38
Covenant (9.7, 8) .....	38
Control (9.9-12) .....	39
<i>Compassion (9, 12)</i> .....	39
<i>Omnipotence (10, 11)</i> .....	39
<i>Justice (10, 11; also 33)</i> .....	39
<i>Revelation (12)</i> .....	40
Commands (9.13-14) .....	40
Compassion (9.15-21).....	40
<i>Provision (15)</i> .....	40
<i>Provocation (9.16-18)</i> .....	41
<i>Providence (9.19-21)</i> .....	41
Conquest (9.22-25) .....	41
Challenge (9.26-28) .....	42
Captivity (9.29-31).....	42
Confession (9.32-35).....	43
Cry (9.36-37) .....	44
Specifics .....	44
Summary .....	44
<b>Response (9.38-10.39)</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Covenantal Response (9.38-10.39) .....	45
Committing Regime (9.38-10.39) .....	45
Prepared.....	45
Papered (9.38) .....	46
Pressed (9.38, 10.1).....	46
Personal (10.1-27) .....	46

Public (10.28-29).....	47
Priorities (10.29-39).....	47
<i>Subservience to God's Law (29)</i> .....	48
<i>Separation from Pagans (30)</i> .....	48
<i>Sabbath Keeping (31)</i> .....	48
<i>Supplying the Poor (31)</i> .....	49
<i>Sacred Service (32-39)</i> .....	49
<i>Summary Promise (39)</i> .....	49
Practiced .....	49
<b>DISPERSED POPULATION (11.1-36).....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Context.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Challenge (1).....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Conscription (1).....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Commendation (2).....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Census (3-19).....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Community (3, 20-36).....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Cities (1, 18).....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>DEDICATION PRAISE (12.1-47) .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Priestly Periods (1-26) .....</b>	<b>54</b>
Return from Babylon (1-9).....	54
Persian Monarchy (10, 11).....	54
Reflection Back to the Days of Joiakim (12-21).....	54
Priests and Levite Leaders at the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah (22-26).....	55
<b>Personnel Procurement (8, 9, 27-29).....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Prophetic Prescription (24, 36).....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Praise Procession (9, 24, 26-28, 30-42).....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>People's Participation (27, 43).....</b>	<b>57</b>
Great Sacrifices.....	57
Great Rejoicing.....	58
Grateful Families.....	58
<b>Primary Purpose (27, 30).....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Priestly Provisions (44-47).....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>DIRECTED PURIFICATION (13.1-31) .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Setting (1, 4, 6, 7, 23).....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Separation (1-3, 23-24).....</b>	<b>60</b>

<b>Scouring (4-9)</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<b>Strategy (25-30)</b> .....	<b>61</b>
Pronounced .....	61
Punished.....	61
Promise .....	62
Precedent .....	62
Pleaded .....	62
Purged .....	62
Purified .....	62
Prayed/Propheied.....	63
<b>Support (10-14, 31)</b> .....	<b>63</b>
<b>Sabbath (15-22)</b> .....	<b>63</b>
Commercial Activity (15, 16) .....	63
Covenant Accountability (17, 18) .....	64
Civil Administration (19-22) .....	65
Consummate Authority.....	66
<b>Supplication (14, 22, 31)</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>The <i>Life</i> of Nehemiah – Nehemiah the Man</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>The <i>Lessons</i> of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah’s Activities and Actions Teach Us</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>The <i>Likeness</i> of Nehemiah – Nehemiah as a Type of Christ</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>The <i>Legacy</i> of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah Accomplished</b> .....	<b>67</b>

## Introduction

1. What attributes or characteristics make a good leader?
2. Who was Nehemiah? What did he do as cup bearer for King Artaxerxes? (1.11)
3. What does Nehemiah become later? Why is this a surprise?
4. What are other examples where God intervened and raised up individuals from obscure circumstances to become very important in the history of pagan nations?
5. What lessons can we derive from the example of Nehemiah?

## Discovery Proceedings (1.1-4)

1. How does Nehemiah open his account (1.1)?
2. In modern terms, what might we call this account?
3. Was Nehemiah boasting when he published this account?
4. Where are these words of Nehemiah recorded? Why is this significant?
5. What did Nehemiah want to know? What was his primary concern?
6. How did Nehemiah learn about the state of Judah and Jerusalem?
7. What did Nehemiah learn?
8. Why was it important that the city have walls? What is the spiritual equivalent for the Church?
9. What was Nehemiah's response? What can we learn from his response?

10. What are examples of other instances where Jerusalem is considered in this way (with mourning and weeping)?
  
11. In the Bible, what other city is mourned over when it is destroyed? Are we to weep/mourn over this city?
  
12. What was the nature of Nehemiah's response? What characterized it?
  
13. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Deliverance's Prayer (1.5-11)**

1. What is the structure of Nehemiah's prayer? Provide an outline.
  
2. What elements of Nehemiah's prayer do we find in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples (Mt 6.9-13; Lk 11.2-4)?

### **Praise—Names and Attributes of God (5)**

1. By what names and attributes does Nehemiah call upon God?
  
2. Why did Jesus teach his disciples, and us, to start our prayers with a reference to God in Heaven?
  
3. With what two attributes does Nehemiah describe God?
  
4. What commands is Nehemiah thinking of?
  
5. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Petitions—Hear My Cry and Prayer! (6a, 11a)**

1. The two petitions in his prayer are very similar. What are some of the differences we notice between them?

2. Is there any significance in these differences? Why does he pray essentially the same petition twice?
3. What more do we learn about God from Nehemiah's petition?
4. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Penitence—Confession of Sin (6b, 7)**

1. What do you notice about Nehemiah's confession?
2. Why might it be a surprise that he confesses in this way?
3. What particular sin is he confessing?
4. How serious did he consider this sin?
5. What are *contemporary* examples of this prayer of confession which could be similar?
6. What, beside his nation, could he have had in mind when he used the expression "we Israelites"?
7. How are we responsible for the sins of the Church, which we must confess?
8. Against what standard does Nehemiah measure the sin of his nation and the Church?
9. To whom does this standard apply? Only to the Jewish nation, Christians, or all people?
10. What are some of the implications of Nehemiah's confession of sin as defined relative to God's law?
11. What does his prayer tell us about the God to whom he addressed his confession?

12. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Promises—Appealing to the Promises of God (8, 9)**

1. Why does Nehemiah use the word remember?
2. What are the specific promises that he appeals to in this prayer?
3. What warrant do we have for asking God to remember his promises?
4. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Purpose—Giving God a Reason for the Appeal (10)**

1. What is the reason that Nehemiah gives for why God should answer his prayer?
2. On what basis does he make this appeal, or give a reason to God?
3. How can we apply this petition of Nehemiah's prayer in the Church context?

### **Providence—Personal Appeal for Help (11b)**

1. What does the last part of the prayer include?
2. What was the success he was looking for?
3. What was the favour that he was looking for?
4. What in verse 11 tells us that Nehemiah expected his prayer to be answered?
5. Looking ahead (2.4, 6) what was the outcome of his prayer?

6. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Summary of Nehemiah's Prayer**

### **Divine Providence (2.1-9)**

1. How long was it before Nehemiah presented his case to the king? (compare with Neh 1.1)
2. Why had Nehemiah not presented his case sooner?
3. What was the first thing that the king said to Nehemiah?
4. What was Nehemiah's reaction to the king's question? Does he display a lack of faith?
5. What are the steps in Nehemiah's response to the king? Comment on the significance of each step.
6. What did Nehemiah display in his request?
7. How did King respond?
8. What was the reason the king give all these things to Nehemiah?
9. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Detailed Preparation (2.11-16)**

1. On arriving in Jerusalem, what did Nehemiah do? (11)

2. Why did he not immediately go into action and organize the re-building of the walls?
3. After establishing himself what did he do? (12-15)
4. What does he tell us that he did not do? Why? (16)
5. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Determined People I (2.17-18)**

1. What does Nehemiah do, after he has completed his analysis and preparation?
2. What is the means he uses to communicate his vision?
3. What are some features of this speech that have elements of motivation?
4. There is something missing from this speech which should be missing from any motivational speech. What is missing?
5. What relevance does this speech have for the Church today?
6. Although there are elements in his speech which can be found in all great, or effective, speeches. There is something in his speech, which is not found in many/most other speeches unless they are in the context of preaching. What is that element?
7. What was the response of the people to his speech?
8. What are we told about the work that they began? Why?
9. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Devil's Promoters I (2.10, 19, 20)**

1. Who do we find attacking the plan of the Jews (10, 19)?
2. What was their reaction to the plan and work of the Jews? Why?
3. How did Nehemiah silence the opposition at this time?
4. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Diligent Parties (3.1-32)**

1. Why does God list all the places and people we find in this chapter? Why did scribes faithfully copy this section of the Bible for generations?
2. What different locations did the people working on the wall come from?
3. What different occupations did the people have?
4. What is peculiar about the occupations listed? What is missing from the list?
5. What is common to all the occupations listed as compared with those not listed?
6. What is significant about the number of references to rulers in this list?
7. What special group of workers stands out from all the others?
8. What are some examples of how all can share in the work of a congregation?
9. What do we find in 5 and 27 that is uniquely significant?

10. What indicates that the organization of the labourers was thought through and planned carefully?
11. What indications do we have that the work was considered something special?
12. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Devil's Promoters II (4.1-23)**

### **Petty Troublemakers (1)**

1. Who are the enemies of the people of God (the Jews) that caused troubles previously? (Neh 2.10, 19, 20)
2. What was Sanballat's reaction when he heard that the Jews were rebuilding the wall? How does it compare with his previous reaction (2.10)?
3. Why is he angry?
4. Which of the Ten Commandments is (are) being broken by Sanballat with this behaviour?
5. How does Sanballat direct his anger?

### **Psychological Threats (2-3, 10-12)**

1. What was the form and structure of Sanballat's ridicule? (2)
2. Where else do we see examples of this form of ridicule, in the Bible, in the form of questions?
3. Why is this form of intimidation so often effective?
4. How did Jesus deal with confrontational questions that were put to him?
5. Before whom does Sanballat conduct this ridicule? Why?

6. What does Tobiah do to 'assist' Sanballat with his ridicule? (2)
7. What were the specific questions that Sanballat asked? How is each of these questions used to cast doubt? (2)
8. How does Tobiah reinforce Sanballat's questions? (3)
9. How do the people react to all these psychological threats? (10-11)
10. How is the doubt spread? (12)
11. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Prayer Time (4-5)**

1. What was Nehemiah's reaction to the psychological threat? (4-5)
2. How did he not respond?
3. What does this tell us about the character of Nehemiah?
4. What form did Nehemiah's prayer take? (4-5)
5. What specifically does he request in his prayer? (4)
6. What is the order of progression that we find in these statements?
7. How does he begin his prayer?
8. Why can he open his prayer in this way?

9. Can all men pray prayers in this way?
10. What may be the subtle implication of his opening petition? What might he be implying by calling God 'our/his God'?
11. What does he ask for specifically in the second petition? What is its nature?
12. What does he ask for in the third petition?
13. What does he ask for in the fourth petition?
14. Why are there three petitions of imprecation? Why does he ask three times?
15. How does he conclude his prayer?
16. What lessons can we learn from this prayer of Nehemiah?

### **Physical Threats (6-8)**

1. What was the outcome of the psychological threats? (6)
2. Why are we told the height of the wall?
3. What is the reaction of the enemies of the Jews? (7)
4. How does their reaction, this time, compare with their reaction at first? (compare 7 with 1) Why?
5. What did the enemies do in response to the 'discovery' that the work was going forward? (8)
6. Who were the parties that plotted together? What does this indicate?

7. What was it, specifically, that they planned to do, to deal with this 'rebellion'?
8. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Prepared Teamwork (9, 13-14, 20, 16-23)**

1. What was Nehemiah's, and the people's, reaction to the physical threat? (9)
2. What else did he do to bolster their confidence? (14, 20; 16, 23)
3. What similarity is there between his reaction to the psychological and to the physical threat? What is the difference?
4. What was the nature of the guard? (9, 13, 14)
5. What did he do after he had posted the guard? (14)
6. What else did he use to prepare the people? (9, 14, 16, 23)
7. What are the essential messages of his speech of encouragement? (14)
8. What else did he do to encourage the people? (16-23)
9. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Perseverance Triumphs (15, 21-23)**

1. What was the result of taking preventative action? (15)
2. What are some examples of how we can apply Nehemiah's prevention in the Church context?

3. To whom did they attribute their safety?
4. What was the response of the people once the plans of their enemies were thwarted?
5. What lessons can we derive from this section (and general lessons from the whole chapter)?

## **Destitute's Protector (5.1-19)**

### **The Complaint (1-5)**

1. Who raised the outcry? Who specifically?
2. Why were they poor? What was the specific situation contributing to their poverty? (3)
3. How long did it take to rebuild the walls? (See Nehemiah 6.15) How could a famine develop in that short a period?
4. What contributed to the situation, and compounded the hardship? (1-2, 8-9; 10).
5. Who joined the men in the complaint? (1) What does this indicate?
6. Against whom did they raise this outcry? (1) Who specifically were these? (7)
7. What was the urgency of this problem? Why did Nehemiah have to deal with it at this point?
8. What is famine usually/often a sign of in the Bible? What was its purpose at this time?
9. Why did this trial arise?
10. What were the specific complaints of the people? (2-4)

11. What is a common theme running through the complaints?
12. How does this threat against the rebuilding of the wall compare with those in chapters 4 and 6?
13. Why is it significant that there are three major threats or attacks against the re-building of the wall?
14. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **The Charge (6-7)**

1. What was Nehemiah's reaction on hearing these complaints? (6) Was this a proper reaction?
2. What did Nehemiah do before he confronted the perpetrators of the injustice? (7)
3. How did he handle his anger?
4. What was the cause of his anger? Why was his anger justified? (7)
5. Is it wrong to charge someone interest on a loan? When does interest become usury?
6. Who specifically was the complaint against? (7)
7. What does the Bible have to say about rich oppressors?
8. What lessons can we derive from Nehemiah's willingness to confront the nobles and officials?
9. What are areas of injustice where we need to constructively work out a response?

### **The Confrontation (7-11)**

1. How did Nehemiah deal with the men accused of charging usury/interest? (7, 8)

2. What were the ways he appealed to the nobles, or charged them, to confront them with their sin? (8-11)
3. What was the proper course of action they were to take? (10)
4. What behaviour is required from the nobles (as shown by his example)? (10)
5. What else did he command them to do to rectify the situation? (11)
6. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **The Cure (11)**

1. What is the Biblical model for providing justice in the case of theft?
2. How is the principle of restoration/recompense applied by Nehemiah in this situation? (11)
3. What means did Nehemiah use to deal with the problem of injustice being perpetrated by his countrymen?
4. How does his approach contrast to what we find in much of 'justice' today?
5. How did Nehemiah *not* deal with the problem of the poor?
6. How did Nehemiah's actions differ from what Joseph did in Egypt? (Gen 47.13-26)
7. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **The Consequences (8c, 12-13)**

1. What was the people's reaction to the accusations? (8c, 12, 13)

2. How did Nehemiah ratify the oath? (13)
3. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **The Challenge (14-19)**

1. When do the events described in these verses occur? (14)
2. Why are we told about Nehemiah's generosity?
3. What did he say that he did not do? (14-16)
4. What did he do instead of taking advantage of his position and of the people's hardship (16, 17)?
5. Why did he not act like many others who are put in positions of power or authority?
6. What can we learn from Nehemiah's example of not taking advantage of the people and of sharing his table with those who served with him?
7. How do we see these principles of leadership exhibited by Jesus, the great shepherd and leader of his people?
8. For what does Nehemiah appeal to God to remember him? (19)
9. Why does he ask God to remember him?

### **Devil's Promoters III (6.1-14; 17-19)**

#### **Introduction**

1. When did the Devil's Promoters first appear and when do they re-appear on the scene? (1)
2. What were the strategies they used previously to undermine and stop the work?

3. How did Nehemiah overcome their threats at that time?
4. Why do they now reappear?
5. What devices does Satan, through these men, use in this next attempt to undermine the work of Nehemiah, the Church, and Christ?
6. What do you notice about the nature of all of these attacks?
7. How do we know that these men are the Devil's Promoters, from the context of verse 1?
8. What lessons can we take from these introductory considerations?

### **Intrigue (1-4)**

Intrigue = Cheat, trick, entangle, to arouse the interest, desire, or curiosity. (Webster's).

1. What did the Devil's Promoters ask Nehemiah to do? (2)
2. What is significant about this location? Why did they select it?
3. What did they want Nehemiah to think was their reason for calling the meeting?
4. What, however, was their real reason for calling the meeting?
5. How many times did they ask him to come down and meet with them? Why? (4, 5)
6. How did Nehemiah know that the intention of their scheme was to harm him?
7. What was Nehemiah's response? (3)
8. What does Nehemiah's answer tell about his character (beside the fact that he was discerning)?

9. What did he *not* do?
10. Was it right for Nehemiah to refuse to attend the peace summit? (e.g., Mt 5.42)
11. What are some examples of false reconciliation or peace initiatives that we must avoid?
12. What Lessons can we take from this first personal attack (intrigue) on Nehemiah?

### **Innuendo (5-9)**

Innuendo = A veiled or equivocal reflection on character or reputation, slander. (Webster's)

1. When the request to have Nehemiah meet with them on the plain of Ono did not work, what was the next ploy/tactic that Sanballat and Geshem used in their attempt to discredit Nehemiah? (5)
2. Why was the letter sent unsealed?
3. What were the false accusations contained in the letter? (6-7)
4. What were the means Sanballat used to frighten Nehemiah?
5. Why were these claims of Sanballat obviously false?
6. How did Nehemiah respond to the false letter?
7. What other means did Nehemiah use to counter the false accusations of Sanballat and Geshem? (9)
8. What does Nehemiah's response tell us about his character?
9. What were the basic objectives or motives of Sanballat in sending this letter? (9)

10. What is a primary objective of Satan and non-Christians (with the attack of Sanballat on Nehemiah as an example to provide context for the question)?
  
11. What, from the example of Nehemiah, is the correct means for a Christian to counter false charges?

### **Intimidation (10-14)**

Intimidation = To make timid or fearful, frighten, to compel or deter by or as if by threats. (Webster's)

1. Why was Shemaiah shut in at his home? (10)
  
2. Why would Nehemiah have gone to Shemaiah without knowing the reason?
  
3. What was the suggestion of Shemaiah?
  
4. What was it that made Nehemiah realize that Shemaiah was lying and scheming? (10, 12, 13)
  
5. What was the real situation with respect to Shemaiah? (12, 13)
  
6. What lessons can we take from this temptation?
  
7. What are some ways that these temptations can this be avoided?
  
8. Who else may have participated in this conspiracy? (14)
  
9. Why would these 'prophets' want to discredit and intimidate Nehemiah?
  
10. How does Nehemiah respond to the suggestion? (11)
  
11. Why was it important that Nehemiah not waver in his resolution? (13)

12. What does he mean when he uses the expression: “man like me”? (11)
13. Was Nehemiah supernatural? How was he able to withstand the pressures of his enemies?
14. What do you notice in verse 13 that is parallel to what we find in verses 2 and 9?
15. What lessons can we take from this third attack on Nehemiah?
16. How does Nehemiah conclude his account of the conspiracy, betrayal, and intimidation of Shemaiah and the other prophets (14)?

### **Insinuation (17-19)**

Insinuation – To introduce (as an idea) gradually or in a subtle, indirect, or covert way (~ doubts into a trusting mind). To impart or communicate with artful or oblique reference (~ an evil one dares not charge openly). To introduce (as oneself) by stealthy, smooth, or artful means. (Webster’s)

1. What can we determine about the character of the nobles Nehemiah mentions? (3.5; 5.7, 12; 6.17; 10.29 13.17)
2. What did the nobles do? (17, 19)
3. What did Tobiah do? (19)
4. What lessons can we take from Tobiah’s attack on Nehemiah?

### **Dispatched Project (6.15, 16)**

1. How long did the wall-building project take?
2. When was the wall completed?
3. Why are we told the exact date, what is the significance?

4. What factors contributed to the rapid completion and final success? (16)
5. What was the impact of the completion of the work on the enemies of the Jews?
6. What summary lessons can we take from the work of Nehemiah as he rebuilds the wall of Jerusalem?

## **Delegated Program (7.1-3)**

### **Introduction**

1. What do we discover about the structure of the book of Nehemiah as we begin to study chapter 7?
2. What was Nehemiah's new project? How can this be applied in a Church context?
3. What can we learn from the two-part structure of the book of Nehemiah?

### **Present Priority (1-3)**

1. What did Nehemiah do immediately after the work of rebuilding the walls was completed?
2. What specific programs did he initiate?
3. What was his objective in implementing these programs?
4. What do these initiatives tell us about Nehemiah?
5. Why is it important to move quickly into a 'maintenance' mode after the completion of a great project?

### **Public Piety (1)**

1. What was his first initiative after re-building the walls? (1)

2. What parts of the liturgy/order are mentioned here? And, which are not?
3. What questions does this action of Nehemiah raise?
4. Why did Nehemiah re-introduce the liturgy/order and not Ezra (Compare chapter 8 and also Ezra 3.8)?
5. What exactly, with respect to the liturgy, did Nehemiah reintroduce?
6. Why did he reintroduce it at this time?
7. What are other reasons that Nehemiah re-established the Levitical offices and liturgical order?
8. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Public Polity (2)**

1. After Nehemiah had established the basis for public piety (the observance of the true religion and the reestablishment of the Church's teaching office), what did he then turned his attention to establishing?
2. Whom did he appoint as the chief magistrate of the city of Jerusalem?
3. What other appointment did Nehemiah make?
4. Why did he appoint his own brother? (2)
5. Did Nehemiah have other choices, beside his own brother?
6. What principles was Nehemiah operating under when he appointed these men?

7. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Police Protection (2)**

1. What was Hananiah's appointed role?
2. Was Hananiah's appointed role consistent with the God-defined role for civil magistrates (Rom 13.1-7)?

## **Prescribed Program (2-3)**

1. What programs does Nehemiah prescribe after he has established a government for the city?
2. Why did he establish a citizen militia?
3. What were the duties of the citizen militia that he established?
4. What were the details of the program he instituted for the gates of the city? Why?
5. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Summary**

1. What lessons have we learned from Nehemiah's appointments and programs? (Neh 7.1-3)

## **Delivered People (7.4-73a)**

We now move our consideration from the establishment of infrastructure of the city and community (the rites, rhythms, routine) to filling of the city.

### **Spacious City (7.4)**

1. How big was the city?
2. Why were there so few people living in the city?

3. What was the reason that Jerusalem was founded where it was?
4. Why was Jerusalem re-inhabited?

### **Systematic Census (7.5)**

1. What was Nehemiah's next action after re-establishing Public Piety, Public Polity, and Police Protection?
2. What other censuses in the Bible had an important bearing on the history of redemption?
3. What is the primary purpose of censuses, from the world's perspective vs God's perspective?
4. Why did Nehemiah conduct the census?
5. Who did Nehemiah include in the census? (5) Why?
6. What did Nehemiah do that was different from what might have been done by other leaders at this time?
7. What formed the basis of the census that Nehemiah took? (5) Why?

### **Scribed Catalogue (7.5-62)**

1. As Nehemiah began his census what did he find? (5)
2. What is missing in Nehemiah 7.4-73? (Consider verse 5 and compare it with chapter 11.)
3. What are the facts listed in the preamble of the genealogical record? (6) Why are they recorded?
4. How many men are listed in the preamble to the genealogical record? (7) Why might it be significant?

5. What is noteworthy about the use of the phrases “men of Israel?” (7) and “men of Bethlehem” (26)?
6. What is the structure of the genealogical record of the returning exiles? Why might it be significant?
7. What key lessons did Nehemiah’s census teach the people of Judah?

Before we conclude our consideration of the genealogical record in Nehemiah 7 we should consider some of the problems we encounter, and lessons we can derive, from comparing the list in Nehemiah with the parallel one found in Ezra 2. [This list is also contained in Esdras 5.7-45 in the Apocrypha.]

8. Compare, for example, Nehemiah 7.13 with Ezra 2.8; and Nehemiah 7.15 with Ezra 2.10; etc. What do you notice?
9. What are we to make of these differences, how are we to explain them?
10. What are some of the lessons we can learn from the execution of the census by Nehemiah and his discovery of the genealogical record of the original returnees from the captivity?

### **Separated Community (7.61-65)**

1. Where did some of the people who returned from the captivity come from? (61)
2. What could these people not find?
3. What other group of people could not find their genealogical records? (63-64)
4. Why was it important that they find their genealogical records?
5. What did the governor do to the priests who could not find their genealogical records?
6. Until when were these people to be excluded from the priestly ordinances?
7. Why did the governor exclude from the priesthood the men who could not find their genealogical records?

8. What analogy can we derive from this action?

9. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Summary Count (7.66-69)**

1. Who returned with the Jews?

2. Why did Nehemiah include the totals?

3. Why do the totals differ from the sums?

### **Special Contribution (7.70-72)**

1. Compare Ezra 2.69 and Nehemiah 7.70-72. What do you notice?

2. What lessons can we derive from this section?

### **Settled Country (73a)**

1. What settlement of the towns of Judah is Nehemiah referring to? Compare with Ezra 2.70.

2. What lessons can we derive from this (partial) verse?

## **Declared Precepts (7.73b-8.18)**

### **Reading (7.73b-8.8) - Intellectual Response to the Word**

#### **Place (7.73b-8.1)**

1. When did these events occur? (7.73b, 8.2)

2. Who are the senior civil and religious leaders in Judea at this time? (8.1, 9)

3. What did all the people do? (8.1)

**Pentateuch (8.1-6)**

1. What book did the people ask Ezra to bring out? (8.1, 2)
2. Who was in the assembly? (8.2, 3)
3. What did Ezra do with the Book of the Law? Why? (3)
4. What lessons can we derive from Ezra's reading of the Law?
5. How long did the reading/study of the law continue? (8.3)
6. What were the particulars associated with the reading of the Law? (8.3-6)
7. What can we learn from this example of reading the Law that could enhance our attentiveness, reverence and understanding during worship?

**Proclamation (8.7, 8)**

1. What accompanied the reading of the Law? (8.7, 8)
2. Who instructed the people?
3. How did the Levites instruct the large crowd?
4. What may this religious exercise be the pre-cursor of? Of what does this historical example seem to give us a model?
5. What form did the Levites' instruction take?

## **Rejoicing (8.9-12) - Emotional Response to the Word**

1. What do you notice about verses 9 and 10 that is different from all other verses (except 1.1) that we have studied to this point in the book?
2. Was the account in Nehemiah 8 written by someone other than Nehemiah?
3. What were the people's emotional responses to the word? (9-12)
4. Why did the people weep and grieve? (9)
5. What did the weeping show?
6. What does their reaction to the Law tell us about these people?
7. Why did the people rejoice? (10-12)
8. What specific parts of Deuteronomy (or the Pentateuch) would have given them hope?
9. What lessons can we derive from this section?

## **Fellowship Feast (8.10-12)**

1. What did Nehemiah tell the people to do? (8.10, 12)
2. Why did he tell them to go have a feast?
3. How can we, in the NT context, participate in the same experiences?
4. What does the reference "send portions/some to those who have/for whom nothing (is) prepared" mean? (10, 12)

5. Why are we to practice this kind of hospitality?

## **Responding (8.13-18) - Volitional Response to the Word**

### **Elders' Discovery (Nehemiah 8.13-15)**

1. What day was it?
2. What happened on the day after the Feast of Trumpets? (13)
3. What did Ezra read? (13)
4. Why did Ezra read the Law to the Elders? (13)
5. What was the attitude of the elders as they came to Ezra and the reading of the Law on the day after the feast of Trumpets? (13, 15)
6. What did they find in the Law that they were to do? (14-15)

### **Energetic Dispersion (Nehemiah 8.15-17a)**

1. What kinds of branches did the people bring back? (15, 16)
2. From where did they get the branches? (15)
3. What was the purpose of the branches? (15-17)
4. What was the purpose of building the booths? (15-17)
5. Where did they set up the booths?

### **Earnest Devotion (Nehemiah 8.17b, 18)**

1. What Feast were they celebrating? Why?
2. What does this feast/festival point to?
3. How does this feast/festival apply to us? Should we celebrate it? Or a festival like it?
4. How was the feast/festival celebrated? (17b)
5. What was the reason for their celebration of the feast with very great joy and gladness?
6. What did Ezra do every day during the feast? Why? (18)
7. What does their action teach us?
8. What days and associated actions are mentioned? (18)
9. What else do we notice about their attitude from this verse? (18)

### **Debased Penitents (9.1-37)**

#### **Repentance (9.1-5a)**

1. What were the actions that they performed on this particular day?
2. What may have been happening on this day? What term might be used to describe the assembly on this day?

#### **Place (9.1)**

1. When did these event occur?
2. Who came together for this additional assembly?

3. What may we surmise is the reason this assembly was held?
4. Where did they assemble?
5. How long did they stand?

#### **Penitence (1-3)**

1. What action did they take to show that they were truly penitent?
2. Along with fasting, wearing sackcloth, and separating themselves from foreigners what did they do? (2-3)
3. How did they confess their sins? What form did their confession take?
4. How do we apply this public confession of sin today?

#### **Partition (9.2)**

1. What does the writer mean when he tells us that “[t]hose of Israelite descent had separated from foreigners”?  
(2)
2. What are we to understand as the application of this separation from foreigners? (2)
3. How are we to apply this separation of holiness today?

#### **Proclamation and Praise (3-5a)**

1. What is meant by the reference to reading from the Book of the Law? (3)
2. What did they do when worshiping the LORD their God? (3)
3. Who lead the activities of the revival assembly?

4. Why is it significant that these Levites are mentioned by name?
5. What did they tell the people to do?
6. Who actually lead or conducted the prayer?
7. What should the reading of the Law (as in chapter 8) engender in us?

### **Reflection (9.5b-37)**

#### **Structure**

1. What are different ways we could structure of this prayer?

#### **Similarities**

1. What portions of Scripture are similar in structure/content?

#### **Sections**

1. Why did Nehemiah (or Ezra) choose to include these portions of Israel's history?

#### **Consecration (9.5b)**

1. How does the prayer open?
2. With what invocation does the prayer open? What does this mean?
3. What are the implications of the invocation?
4. How can we follow this example and pray in the name of God?

## Creation (9.6)

1. What does this verse add about the name of God?
2. This verse gives four additional attributes of God, what are they?
3. What shows God's independent self-existence?
4. How is God praised as creator?
5. What is meant by the expression: "you give life to everything"?
6. Why is God worthy of worship?
7. What specific, key, doctrine does this verse assume to be true about God's work?

## Covenant (9.7, 8)

1. What attributes of God are mentioned in verses 7 and 8?
2. Why did God choose Abram and make a covenant with him? (7)
3. How do we reconcile the doctrine of election/predestination (7) with the statement: "You found his heart faithful to you" (8)?
4. What is a covenant?
5. Why does Nehemiah or Ezra mention the covenant made with Abram? (7, 8)
6. What relevance does the covenant made with Abram have for us in the NT context?
7. Besides making a covenant with Abram, what did God do with him? (v 7)

8. Why did the author of the prayer provide a list of the nations that the Israelites disposed? (v 8)
9. What promise is referred to as having been kept? Why was the promise kept? (8)
10. How does the Covenant made with Abram relate to us?

#### **Control (9.9-12)**

1. What attributes of God are mentioned in verses 9-12?
2. What of historical significance is missed out in the prayer that we might have thought the author would have included? Why?

#### *Compassion (9, 12)*

1. How does the account in verse 9 & 12 show God's compassion?
2. What are representative, key, acts in Biblical history (the history of redemption) that demonstrate God's compassion?

#### *Omnipotence (10, 11)*

1. How does this account demonstrate that God is omnipotent?
2. What is omnipotence?
3. What are representative, key, acts in Biblical history that demonstrate God's omnipotence?

#### *Justice (10, 11; also 33)*

1. What is God's justice?
2. There are two aspects to God's justice. What are they?

3. What are representative, key, acts in Biblical history that demonstrate God's justice?
4. What is shown in this account about God's justice and compassion? (9-12)

#### *Revelation (12)*

1. How does this account demonstrate that God is a God of revelation?
2. Why did God communicate his direction with a cloud and pillar of fire? What do they symbolize?
3. Why didn't God just give Moses a map with a dated itinerary of the route they were to take; or each time they were to move on, give him verbal instructions?

#### **Commands (9.13-14)**

1. Into what class(es) does the revelation mentioned in these verses fall?
2. How many different words are used for 'law' in this passage? How many are used in the entire prayer?
3. Where does the law come from?
4. What specific law does the author of this prayer single out? Why?

#### **Compassion (9.15-21)**

This section surrounds a time of rebellion on the part of the Israelites' with God's compassion. God's mercy is a reminder and remedy to rebellion; a reminder (17 "remember the miracles") as they *look* back and a remedy (20 "good Spirit to instruct them") as he *leads* them back.

#### *Provision (15)*

1. What are the signs of God's compassion in mercy (15)?
2. What was special about the land, according to the context of this verse?

*Provocation (9.16-18)*

1. How did the people react to God's compassionate mercy? What characterized their response to God? (16)
2. What are the particular sins of these self-filled people that the prayer mentions? (16-18)
3. What do we find embedded in the midst of the account of their rebellion? (17c)
4. God will not forsake his people (see also 19a). What is the truth about God that is taught in this statement often called?

*Providence (9.19-21)*

1. What additional aspects of God's providence are mentioned in these verses that we have not considered thus far?
2. What does the contrast between "your" and "Spirit" tell us?
3. What additional evidence shows that the Spirit is a person? (20)
4. What hint of the Trinity is found here? (19, 20)
5. What is a way that we can apply these provisions to the spiritual life?

*Conquest (9.22-25)*

1. What are the specific things in these verses that God did for his people?
2. What was their immediate response to the provisions from God? (25)
3. How are we to apply verses like these (22-25) in the NT Church?

### Challenge (9.26-28)

1. How does verse 25 end? How does verse 26 open? What does this contrast tell us?
2. In what ways had they disregarded God's goodness? What is the order in the list of sins?
3. What relevance does this list of sins have in the context of modern NA or 21<sup>st</sup> century culture?
4. Who were some of the prophets who were killed by the Jews?
5. What was the role of the prophets identified in this verse? (26)
6. In what ways are pastors/elders in the NT Church called to the same role?
7. What was the means that God used to bring his people back to covenant obedience? (27, 28)
8. What, specifically, led to the people departing from God's way? Why? (28)
9. What brought about a restoration of God's care and provision for his people? (27, 28)
10. How does prayer bring about a restoration of God's care and provision?
11. How does God raise up deliverers today?
12. How many times did God hear the prayers of his people and restore them? (28)

### Captivity (9.29-31)

1. What additional information about God's dealing with his people are presented in verses 29 and 30 that we have not encountered before?

2. Compare verses 19 and 28 what do we find that appears to be a contradiction? How can we explain it?

### Confession (9.32-35)

1. In this section we are introduced to additional specific attributes of God that were not recorded in the previous sections of the prayer. What are these attributes?
2. What does the expression “our God” teach about God?
3. How does Nehemiah use the expression “our God”? (4.4, 9, 20, 5.9; 6.16, 10.32-39, and 13.2, 4, 18, 27)
4. Who are the people that can say: “Our God”?
5. In what ways is God great, as identified in this prayer? (32)
6. What similarities do we find in the prayer recorded in Nehemiah 1.1-11; specifically in verse 5?
7. What is the Covenant of Love?
8. How is the author of this prayer using the “covenant of love” as the basis for his appeal in this prayer?
9. What attribute of God is mentioned in 33? What is the context?
10. What is the structure of the confession in this prayer? (32-34)
11. Who is included in the lists of sinners? (32, 34) Why?
12. What do we find is the nature of the confession of sin in this part of the prayer?
13. How do they accept the punishment that was meted out by God as a result of their sin? (33)

14. What exacerbates sin and increases the need for confession? (35)

### **Cry (9.36-37)**

1. What are the component complaints of their cry?
2. What is the reason that they are in this distress?
3. What are the sins recounted in this prayer?
4. How can we apply this plaintive cry?

### **Specifics**

1. What are some observations we can make about prayer from this exemplar?
2. What is the source for this prayer? Where does the author find the material for inclusion in this prayer?
3. What does the use of quotations and allusions from the rest of the OT teach us about prayer?
4. Who is the author of this prayer?

### **Summary**

1. What is the main theme running throughout this prayer?
2. What are some of the goals of this prayer?
3. What have learned about God from this prayer? What are some of the attributes of God that have been recounted for us in this prayer?
4. What are some of the particular instances of God's goodness to Israel recounted in this prayer?

5. What can we learn about prayer from studying this prayer?
6. What are some principles for prayer we can derive from this prayer of Nehemiah as a model?
7. What are the immediate and broader temporal contexts for this prayer?
8. What general lessons can we derive from this prayer?

### **Response (9.38-10.39)**

#### **Covenantal Response (9.38-10.39)**

1. After the people had collectively confessed their sins what do we find them doing? (38)
2. What in this section (Neh 9 and 10) indicates that this is a covenant?
3. What, in the structure of the passage, indicates that this section is recounting a covenantal enactment?
4. How is the act of covenant making referred to? (38)
5. Why did the people make a covenant at this time?

#### **Committing Regime (9.38-10.39)**

1. What routine did the people follow that reinforced, and showed, their commitment to the covenant?

#### **Prepared**

1. What actions did they undertake before they made the covenant? (9.1-9.39)
2. What are extra-biblical historical examples of God's people preparing through worship before they set off on a new venture?

3. How should we apply this example of preparation to our own situations?

### Papered (9.38)

1. What steps did they take to reinforce the binding nature of their covenantal commitment?
2. What are examples, in our cultural context, where contractual commitments are documented in written form?
3. Why was the agreement documented in written form? Why, in general, are contracts written down?
4. How does God set an example for the action the people took in writing down the terms of their contract?

### Pressed (9.38, 10.1)

1. What steps did they take to reinforce the binding nature of their covenantal commitment?
2. Why did they seal it? What is the significance of this action?
3. How did they seal it?
4. What are other ways that covenants were sealed in the OT economy?
5. What are some ways we can apply sealing of a covenant, in our circumstances and situation?

### Personal (10.1-27)

1. Who signed the covenant?
2. What do we notice about those who signed (sealed the covenant)?
3. What is the significance of the leaders signing on behalf of the people?
4. Who do we find missing from this list of signatures?

5. Why does God list the names of those who signed/sealed the covenant?
6. What are examples from extra-biblical history where we find a list recording the people who signed a covenant/treaty document?
7. What lessons can we derive from the leaders signing/sealing the covenant document?

#### Public (10.28-29)

1. Who else, beside those who signed/sealed the covenant, were involved in the covenant making ceremony?
2. What does this 'separation' of the people refer to?
3. Who were included with the circumcised males?
4. Why does God identify these roles and groups of people?
5. How were the others involved in the covenant swearing ceremony?
6. What was the physical action that probably accompanied the oath-taking?
7. What was the underlying motivation for swearing to the covenant?
8. What did their participation in the swearing ceremony indicate?
9. What lessons can we derive from this section?

#### Priorities (10.29-39)

1. What were the priorities that the people agreed to?

### *Subservience to God's Law (29)*

1. What Law did they commit to obey?
2. What might be the significance of this use of God (*Elohim*), LORD (*Jehovah*), and *Adoni* (Lord); the three primary names of God.?
3. What words are used to describe God's law?
4. What do we find in 2 Kings 23.1-3 (2 Chronicles 34.29-32)?
5. What does this agreement to keep the Law in the context of a covenant renewal indicate?

### *Separation from Pagans (30)*

1. How did they promise to keep themselves separate from pagans?
2. Why was making this promise important at this time?
3. Why was it a problem if the people intermarried with the nations around them?
4. Were the people faithful to their promise?
5. What is the application of this prohibition?

### *Sabbath Keeping (31)*

1. What principle did the people promise to keep/enforce, as recorded in verse 31?
2. What aspects/dimensions of the Sabbath-principle are mentioned in verse 31?
3. Why is this command the only one of the Ten Commandments specifically mentioned in their covenant vows?

4. What lessons can we derive from this section?

#### *Supplying the Poor (31)*

1. What else did they commit to do along with observing the Sabbath?
2. Why did they commit to this action?

#### *Sacred Service (32-39)*

1. What type of commitment is made in these verses?
2. What are the specific commitments they make?
3. What relevance does their commitment to provide contributions for the work of the Temple have for us in the NT age in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

#### *Summary Promise (39)*

1. What lesson can we learn from the people's response? (29-39)
2. What is their concluding promise?
3. What is the application or relevance of this promise for us?

#### **Practiced**

1. How did they follow through on their promised actions? (11.1, 2)
2. Was their commitment sincere?
3. What are some lessons that we can take from their failure to continue fulfilling their covenant commitments?

## Dispersed Population (11.1-36)

### Context

1. What is the *larger* historical context for the events in Nehemiah 11? Why did the city need to be resettled?
2. Why were there few people living in the city?
3. What was the reason that Jerusalem was founded where it was?
4. Why was Jerusalem re-inhabited?
5. What is the *immediate* historical context to the events in Nehemiah 11?

### Challenge (1)

1. What may have been the reasons so few leaders and people were willing to settle in the city?
2. What is the first thing we are told about the relocation program?
3. Who were these leaders? (3)
4. How many people are named as those who signed/sealed the covenant? (10.1-27)
5. How many of the named leaders (4-19) signed/sealed the covenant? (Compare with 10.1-27)
6. Why did so few of the leaders who signed/sealed the covenant, apparently, settle in the city?
7. What was the reason the leaders settled in the city?

8. Is there a 'follow through' problem on the part of some of the signers of the covenant?
9. What lessons can we learn from the opening statement of this chapter "Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem"?

### **Conscription (1)**

1. What does the use of casting lots indicate?
2. Is there an application of Nehemiah's action to our situation?

### **Commendation (2)**

1. What did the people do to those who volunteered to live in the city?
2. How would they likely have blessed/commended them?
3. What are examples from our current national context where commendation of right/good actions is offered?
4. How in the Church, today, can we apply this kind of commendation?

### **Census (3-19)**

1. Who were the people who populated the city?
2. How many people re-inhabited Jerusalem (according to this account)?
3. What was the purpose for including the list of names of this census, in his account?
4. What do we find about the mix, in terms of the roles, of the inhabitants in the city?
5. How are the men from Judah and some of the priests described? (6, 14)

6. What is the balance between inhabitants from Judah and Benjamin? (6 & 8)
7. What was Judah's role? (9)
8. Where were the priests drawn from? (11-14)
9. Did Ezra live in the city? (11)
10. What was the role of the Levites? (16)
11. What was Mattaniah's role? (17).
12. What was the gatekeepers role? (19)
13. What does this listing of the various people who inhabited the city, and their various roles and gifts/skills teach us?

### **Community (3, 20-36)**

1. Why did the writer (ultimately the Holy Spirit) think it important to tell us where the rest of population settled?
2. Where did the people who didn't settle in Jerusalem live? (3, 20, 25-30, 31-36)
3. Who were the Temple servants, and where did they live? (21)
4. What lessons can we derive from the reference to the settlement of the non-city dwellers?
5. What do we learn about the Levites/singers? (22-23, 36)

6. Where did some of them (Levites) live? (36).
  
7. What was Pethahiah's role? (24)
  
8. What do we learn from the list of the towns of Judah and Benjamin? (25-35)
  
9. What lessons can we derive from the account of the re-settlement of the territories of Judah and Benjamin?

### **Cities (1, 18)**

The consideration of the lessons from the re-settlement of Jerusalem and the surrounding territory leads logically to consideration of what God's purpose in establishing his kingdom. His kingdom is an 'urban' kingdom, the City of God.

1. What specifically does our text call the city of Jerusalem? (Neh 11.1, 18)
  
2. What are our responsibilities to the Holy City?

### **Dedication Praise (12.1-47)**

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem in the fall of 445 (or 444) BC when he heard of its disrepair and decay (Neh 1). After examining the state of the wall he commissioned a rebuilding project (Neh 1, 2) that faced significant challenges from the enemies of the Jews (Neh 2, 4, 6) and from a famine that caused unrest among the people (Neh 5). The construction of the wall (Neh 3) was completed (Neh 6) on the 25<sup>th</sup> Elul (Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>, 444/445 BC; Neh 6.15). This concluded phase 1 of Nehemiah's project: *The Reconstruction of the City*.

Once the wall was in place and people could live in the city with a degree of safety, Nehemiah began phase 2 of his project: *The Reconstruction of the Community*. He established a governing structure for the city (Neh 7.1-3) and began the process of repopulating the city. First a census was taken (Neh 7). The people were then called together for a renewal of the Covenant (Neh 7-10) that included a reading of the Law on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Tishri/Ethanim (October 8<sup>th</sup>, 445/444 BC; Neh 7.73) and the confession of sin on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the (same) month (Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, 445/444 BC). The community was then prepared to take seriously their responsibilities toward the city and it was repopulated voluntarily and through means of a subscribed conscription (Neh 11).

The essentials were in place—the city had been rebuilt and the community stabilized. Nehemiah and Ezra were then able to lead the people in a special dedication ceremony to commit the city into the hands of God, for the glory of God. It is this ceremony of Dedication Praise, recounted in Nehemiah 12, that we will now consider.

## **Priestly Periods (1-26)**

1. What is recorded in this section? (1-26)
2. What are the priestly historical periods that we find recorded?

## **Return from Babylon (1-9)**

1. How many names are listed as having returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua? Why?
2. Why would the priests at the time of the return from the Captivity be listed? Why didn't Nehemiah just identify the priests who were involved in the ceremony of dedication?
3. Who is listed in the **first section**? (1-7)
4. Who is listed in the **second section**? (8-9)
5. What were their duties?
6. What are the 'thanksgiving Psalms'?

## **Persian Monarchy (10, 11)**

1. Who is listed in the **third section**?
2. What does the inclusion of the line of high priests to Jaddua (Jaddus) who was high priest at the time of Alexander the Great (332 BC) tell us?

## **Reflection Back to the Days of Joiakim (12-21)**

1. Who is listed in the **fourth section**?
2. One name in Neh 12.16 requires particular consideration, which is it?
3. Why does the account go back to Joiakim? Why doesn't it start with the priests and Levites serving at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

### **Priests and Levite Leaders at the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah (22-26)**

1. Who is listed in the **fourth section**?
2. What do we discover about the genealogical accounts of the high priests and of the courses of priests during the administration of Eliashib and his direct descendants? (22, 23)
3. Who are the leaders among the Levites identified in verses 24 and 25?
4. What were their roles?
5. What possible problem is presented in verse 26?
6. What does verse 26 tell us about the genealogical list in verses 10 and 11?
7. Why is this list of names recorded here? (1-26) What overall lessons can we derive from this account?

### **Personnel Procurement (8, 9, 27-29)**

1. Who were the key personnel needed for the dedication of the wall?
2. What are some of the things the Bible teaches about this group of people?
3. Why were they needed at this time (i.e., at the dedication of the wall)?
4. What role should Levites play in the worship of the Church today?
5. Who serves in the capacity of the Priests and Levites in the NT Church?
6. What is the role of the Elders with respect to leading in worship?

7. How did the Levites in Nehemiah's day demonstrate their commitment to service? (27-29)
8. What does the Levites' commitment to service teach us?

### **Prophetic Prescription (24, 36)**

1. What regulated the service of worship at the dedication of the wall?
2. Where is the prescription of David found?
3. What is David called?
4. What is the significance of this appellation?
5. Why did David have a right to prescribe worship practices or change their form?
6. Does the action of David give other civil magistrates (emperors, kings, presidents, prime ministers) the right to prescribe a particular form of worship?
7. In what areas of worship did David's regulations have significant impact?
8. What lessons can we derive from the consideration that the prescriptions for worship were delivered through the prophetic office?
9. Which Psalms *might* have been used as part of the dedication of the wall and city?

### **Praise Procession (9, 24, 26-28, 30-42)**

1. What is dedicated to the LORD? (27, 30)
2. When was the wall/city dedicated?

3. Who supervised the dedication ceremonies? (26, 31, 36)
4. What were the artefacts used in the dedication and how were they used? (27, 28, 30, 35, 41-43)
5. Where does the practice of Levitical choirs originate? (31)
6. Did David adopt the practices of the nations around him when he introduced musical instruments and singing?
7. How was the procession of choirs structured and organized? (31-38)
8. Why did the processions encompass the city?
9. What is the application of the two choirs in our NT context?
10. Where did the choirs go after they had proceeded along the walls? (40-43)
11. What was the purpose of their coming into the “house of God”?
12. What is the reason for two choirs standing opposite each other? (9, 24)

### **People’s Participation (27, 43)**

1. How did the people celebrate the dedication? (43)

### **Great Sacrifices**

1. What does “great sacrifices” mean?
2. Why were there so many sacrifices?
3. What was the purpose of offering the sacrifices at the dedication of the wall/city?

4. How should we respond to the 'negatives' people associate with sacrifices?

5. What is the NT application of these sacrifices?

### **Great Rejoicing**

1. What were they rejoicing about?

2. What is an application of this consideration of their rejoicing?

### **Grateful Families**

1. What are we told about who attended the festivities?

2. Where have we seen something similar in Nehemiah?

3. What do the references to families worshiping together teach us?

4. How should this participatory worship be worked out?

### **Primary Purpose (27, 30)**

1. What was the purpose of the dedication of the city walls/city?

2. What are the implications for us in the NT Church?

3. Does this dedication ceremony teach us anything about our possessions, in general?

4. How can we apply this dedication ceremony to our buildings?

### **Priestly Provisions (44-47)**

1. What was the final act of establishing the renewed worship in the restored city/Temple? (44-46)

2. What were the reasons that the goods and money were brought to the Temple? (44)
3. What were the responsibilities of the men who served in the Temple? (44-46)
4. What were the means of supporting the work of the Temple staff?
5. What is the precedent that Nehemiah gives for collecting and using these contributions? (45-47)
6. What were the Levites required to do with the goods that they received from the people? (47)
7. What is the application of the considerations of the Priestly Provisions (44-47)? What relevance does the example of the actions of the Jews around 444/445 BC, who provided contributions for the work of the Temple, have for us in the NT age in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## **Directed Purification (13.1-31)**

1. Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem after a period of absence. What does he find on his return?
2. What are the five problems (in this chapter) that needed to be addressed and corrected?
3. In summary, what were the people not showing?
4. What are some preliminary observations/lessons we can derive from a survey of this chapter?
5. What do you observe about the 'pulse' of this account?
6. We can organize our consideration of this chapter as follows:

## **Setting (1, 4, 6, 7, 23)**

1. When did these events occur? (6)

2. What does 'on that day' mean? What day was it? (1)

### **Separation (1-3, 23-24)**

1. What are the two situations in which Nehemiah exercises exclusions?

2. What was read to the people that day that precipitated action on their part? (1, 2)

3. What does it mean that they 'excluded' or 'separated'?

4. Who was excluded?

5. What lessons can we derive from the exclusion exercised at the reading of the Law?

6. What else did Nehemiah discover that concerned him on his return from the Persian capital? (23-24)

7. What connection is there between the problem of inter-marriage (23) and the problem of inclusion in the assembly (3)?

8. What was the problem?

9. What lesson(s) can we take from Nehemiah's actions?

10. What is the application of this prohibition with respect to inter-marriage in the Church today?

### **Scouring (4-9)**

1. Who was Eliashib?

2. What had Eliashib done that was not right?

3. What did Nehemiah do with Tobiah's household goods?

4. What lessons can we learn and apply from Nehemiah's expulsion of Tobiah?

### **Strategy (25-30)**

1. What was Nehemiah's strategy for ensuring that the separation from the surrounding nations was complete? What steps did he take? (25-30)

### **Pronounced**

1. What was the form of his rebuke?
2. What lesson can we derive from Nehemiah's action?
3. Does Nehemiah's action mean that the civil magistrate has responsibility over the family?

### **Punished**

1. How did he beat some of them?
2. Why did he pull out the hair of some of them?
3. Why did he punish 'some'?
4. Were these actions too violent and inappropriate?
5. How do the actions of Nehemiah and Ezra compare? (Compare: Ezra 10.1-17; Neh 13.23-27.)
6. How can we explain the difference in their actions?
7. What kind of punishment for intermarriage of a Christian (a professing believer) with an unbeliever is appropriate in NT context?

**Promise**

1. What had the people done a decade, or so, before the events recorded in Nehemiah 13? (Neh 10.30)
2. What does their behaviour tell us about human nature?
3. What lessons can we derive from Nehemiah's action?

**Precedent**

1. What historical precedent does he use?
2. What is the warning of this history lesson?

**Pleaded**

1. How did he plead with them?

**Purged**

1. Who did he drive away?
2. Why does Nehemiah single out this action?
3. What did Nehemiah accomplish by his action?

**Purified**

1. What does it mean that he purified/cleansed them?
2. After he had purified them, what did he do?
3. What lessons can we derive from Nehemiah's purification of the people?

### **Prayed/Prophesied**

1. What kind of prayer did he offer up at this point?
2. What is the place of imprecatory prayer for believers in the NT economy?

### **Support (10-14, 31)**

1. What problem did Nehemiah discover and confront with respect to the provisions for the work of the Temple?
2. When we studied Nehemiah 10.35-39 and 12.44-47, what did we note that the leaders and people had committed/covenanted to supply?
3. What was the specific issue that Nehemiah confronted?
4. Why would this problem have particularly distressed Nehemiah?
5. What were the consequences of this negligence?
6. What actions did Nehemiah take to rectify the situation?
7. What lessons can we derive from this consideration of support for the priests/Levites?

### **Sabbath (15-22)**

1. What observations can we make about the Sabbath from a general review of this passage?
2. Compare Isaiah 58.12-14 with Nehemiah.

### **Commercial Activity (15, 16)**

1. What did Nehemiah discover when he returned to Judah/Jerusalem?

2. What are the specific activities that Nehemiah refers to as falling within the prohibitions of the Sabbath Principle?
3. What class of activity summarizes these specific activities and falls within the prohibitions of the Sabbath?
4. How does this passage apply the principle found in the Creation Ordinance?
5. How does this passage apply the principle found in the Ten Commandments?
6. Based on the example of Nehemiah, what are specific examples of activities undertaken in 21<sup>st</sup>-century NA that clearly fall within the prohibitions of the Sabbath Principle?
7. What other classes of commercial activity in our day can we include under this prohibition because, by logical extension, they are associated with the commercial activities that are prohibited?
8. What lessons can we take from this passage?

**Covenant Accountability (17, 18)**

1. What does Nehemiah call the Sabbath breaking of the Jews of his day?
2. What standard did Nehemiah use?
3. What is the consequence of this wickedness according to Nehemiah?
4. What is the context he uses in his rebuke?
5. What is implication of his statements in this context?
6. What is the connection between the Covenant and the Sabbath?
7. What evidence do we have that the people of Nehemiah's day understood the Sabbath Principle to be associated with covenant keeping?

8. Why is breaking the sign (the Sabbath) equivalent to rejecting the whole Covenant? (Ezk 20.12, 13, 16, 21, 24)
  
9. Who specifically does Nehemiah rebuke? Why?
  
10. How should we apply verses Nehemiah 17 and 18 to our own situation today?

### **Civil Administration (19-22)**

1. Who else did Nehemiah hold accountable for keeping the sign of the Covenant? (19-22)
  
2. What did he tell the foreigners that they should/should not do?
  
3. What actions did he take to enforce his commands?
  
4. What, in this passage, shows that Nehemiah understood that the Sabbath Law was applicable to both Jew and Gentile?
  
5. How could Nehemiah justify the use of civil officers to enforce the Sabbath Law?
  
6. What did he expect from God as a result of taking these actions?
  
7. What would most people, today, find peculiar about his actions?
  
8. What did Nehemiah indicate that he would do with the merchants (probably both Jews and Gentiles) who persisted in their commercial activities on the Sabbath?
  
9. What does Nehemiah's application of the Sabbath Law to all people (Jew and Gentile) teach in Summary about the Sabbath?

### **Consummate Authority**

1. What do you notice about the structure of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20.1-21, Dt 5.6-21)?
2. In Nehemiah 9.14, what does Nehemiah call the Sabbath? What is the significance?
3. In Nehemiah 10.31 which of the Ten Commandments is referenced in the Covenant renewal? Why?
4. Why is keeping the Sabbath so important?

### **Supplication (14, 22, 31)**

1. How does Nehemiah end the account of his work in Jerusalem?
2. What are the specific ways that he asked God to remember him in chapter 13?
3. What is Nehemiah's motive in asking God to remember him? (Compare: 14 and 22 with 31.)
4. Is he in some way suggesting that he can earn his salvation, or merit with God through good works?

### **Conclusion**

We come to the end of our studies in the book of Nehemiah. All that we know about the man, who is the subject of this book, is what we find written in the thirteen chapters of the book. The only other possible reference to him is found in Ezra 2.2. To conclude our study, let us consider (in summary form) Nehemiah from four perspectives.

#### **The *Life* of Nehemiah - Nehemiah the Man**

1. What have we learned about Nehemiah, the man, as we have studied this book?

## **The *Lessons* of Nehemiah - What Nehemiah's Activities and Actions Teach Us**

1. What are the summary lessons we can derive from Nehemiah's activities actions?

## **The *Likeness* of Nehemiah - Nehemiah as a Type of Christ**

1. In what ways does Nehemiah point to Christ?

## **The *Legacy* of Nehemiah - What Nehemiah Accomplished**

1. How does the book of Nehemiah open?
2. How does the book of Nehemiah close?
3. Why does the book not end with the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem?
4. Was Nehemiah's work a success?
5. What is the lesson of Nehemiah's legacy?